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ABSTRACT

The booklet is a guide for community resource people who have agreed to share their job experiences with high school students involved in experience-based learning programs. The programs allow students to observe and participate in the daily routines required in careers they may wish to pursue. Resource people can use this booklet to determine how to plan their time with students, evaluate student performance, and deal with problems of poor behavior and attitude. A question and answer section reviews concerns about liability, child labor laws, and how to assure that students' participation is educationally productive. The roles of the community resource person can include supervisor, model, instructor, counselor, and evaluator. The resource person should clearly describe his or her job, define its advantages and disadvantages, and provide the student with meaningful instructional activities related to the job. Students may be involved in either of two types of programs: community explorations, in which students get a brief introduction to a job and its required skills; or student projects, in which they spend up to several months participating in a job routine. (AV)

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The Community Resource Person's Guide for Experience-Based Learning.

by Ruth Fredine Burt and Marcia Douglas

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What participants say . . .

I wish you could see students' faces light up when I ask them if they enjoy the program. It almost makes me sad when they tell me they're getting turned on to learning for the first time. They seem to be discovering that our generation isn't so bad either, which is only fair since we're discovering the same about them.

. . . Resource Person

We think the program is great because students learn by doing, not just by reading about how something is done.

. . . Parent

It's the first time I've really looked forward to school. By the end of the year I will have done more work than in my two previous years combined.

. . . Student

There's a lot to be learned from people in the community. Students can hear only so much from teachers, and it's good for them to hear it from others as well. They're finding out just how important an education really is.

. . . Teacher

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Ruth Fredine Burt and Marcia Douglas

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COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSON'S GUIDE
for Experience-Based Learning

Welcome to the growing number of community people who are volunteering to help students learn outside the classroom. Many students today are eager to learn by doing and to learn from people like you who are active participants in the working life of the community.

We are asking you to help students learn through the daily tasks you do in your job. You are part of a carefully planned school effort to prepare students for the challenges they face after graduation. Through your career and the place where you work, you will be demonstrating some of the basic values, attitudes and skills needed for adult living.

You will not only be acquainting students with your own work but also helping them set personal goals that are adaptable to *any* career field. Your involvement in this unique endeavor is an important investment in the lives of individual students and the future of your community.

How This Booklet Can Help

The following pages offer guidelines to help you plan ways to support students at each stage of their learning.

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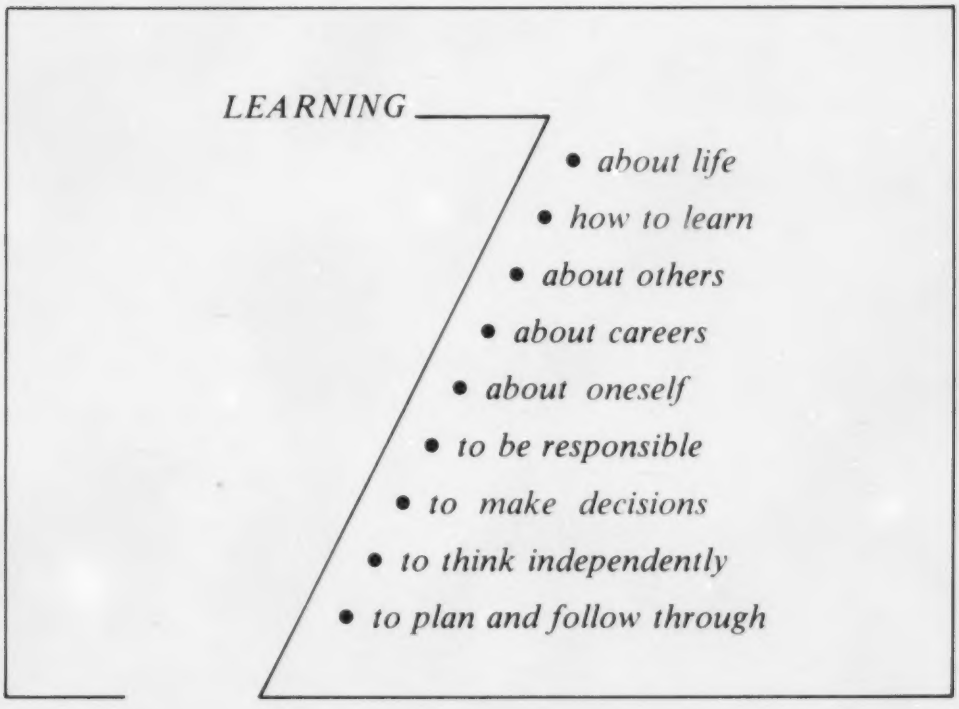
Experience-Based Learning Is Learning By Doing



Experience-based learning is a carefully structured series of activities using community resource people and their workplaces to provide not only the setting for student learning but also the content. Facilities and expertise that already exist in the community are used to teach students skills they will need as adults—job-related skills as well as things they must know to function effectively as responsible citizens.

Experience-based learning asks students to take a more active role in designing and carrying out their own education, gradually moving away from dependence on textbooks toward more independent learning from a variety of resources.

Teachers are anxious for this opportunity to offer more realistic learning situations for their students. Textbooks and classrooms cannot duplicate your experience, knowledge, understanding of what's expected in the working world and insights into the long-range economic picture in your career field.

What Being a Resource Person Is All About

As a resource person you will fill many different roles:

Model: Students will be observing you as an adult, employee or employer, citizen and community member.

Supervisor: Students will look up to you as someone skilled in specialized tasks and responsible for making decisions.

Instructor: You will be helping students learn specific things as well as keeping track of student performance.

Counselor: You will have opportunities to help students think through career, personal and academic questions—sometimes merely by lending a sympathetic ear.

Evaluator: In this important capacity, you will sign off on students' abilities to do specified tasks and you will keep students informed about their progress.

Who can be a resource person?

Anyone in the community is a potential resource person for student learning, whether their work is manual, technical, volunteer or professional. Students need to see firsthand how adults manage their working lives. Teaching students through your job is something only *you* can do.

What is expected of a resource person?

A resource person should be able to relate easily to young people and feel comfortable doing the following:

- providing a clear description of your career
- defining your job's advantages and disadvantages
- devoting some of your job time to instructional activities without feeling you're neglecting your own work
- describing how your career affects family responsibilities, leisure time, active citizenship and lifelong learning

How much time you spend with each student will be determined by you and the student with assistance from the students' teachers and advisers.

School staff will help you all the way

You're not in this alone. You will have a school contact person to orient you to the specifics of each student placement. This person will be only a phone call away whenever you need information or assistance.

Name of your school contact	Telephone
Address	

Sometimes there may be a written agreement between you and the school covering your participation as a resource person. This agreement will simply make clear what you have agreed to do, specifying such things as the kinds of learning experiences you think you can provide and the site personnel and times that will be available for students.

How Students Can Learn From You

Experience-based learning has two distinct differences from the field trips or guided tours schools have scheduled in the past: there is a more prolonged and involved exchange of information between the students and resource people, and activities are usually planned for individual students rather than groups. Students in experience-based programs learn primarily through two kinds of activity:

- **community explorations,** where students get a brief introduction to your job and the application of basic skills in a work setting
- **student projects,** taking whatever amount of time you and the student determine is needed to accomplish the student's learning goals

Students will contact you when they are interested in either type of study, and the particulars of the experience will be planned cooperatively by you, the student and staff. Details may differ from program to program, but your school contact will be able to give you the appropriate specifics.

NOTE: Experience-based learning is not the same as cooperative work experience. Students in the activities suggested here are not paid for their educational experience in the community. They are learners, not employees. Their on-the-job training is strictly for educational purposes; they do not displace regular employees and their activities are not financially productive for the employer. Their involvement at workplaces in the community is for brief periods of time to meet stated learning objectives.

See page 20 for more on the legal basis for this policy.

COMMUNITY EXPLORATIONS

Community explorations help students learn about specific jobs and relate that learning to their interests and abilities. By moving from site to site and completing a series of explorations, students meet a variety of people and experience many different work environments and lifestyles. Explorations may range from one to five days—with three days a good average. Exact schedules are worked out at your convenience, but it is preferable for students to be onsite from three to five hours each day.

Explorations are intended to help students—

1. meet adults and see how they interact in the course of a normal workday
2. learn about particular occupations while refining their career selection skills
3. gain a better understanding of the relationship between learning and earning a living
4. acquire practical work experience in writing, speaking, listening and mathematics
5. re-examine their individual goals and learning plans in relation to what they are experiencing

The exploration process is *not* intended to provide entry-level job skills for students, although students should gain some hands-on experience in order to assess their own aptitudes for the work. The primary concern of explorations is to give students practice in making decisions and processing information—skills they will use for the rest of their lives. Your personal insights into career mobility and how individuals grow and change throughout adulthood can be extremely helpful to students.

Examples of exploration activities

The first day of an exploration can be spent touring the workplace, meeting employees and receiving a general orientation. On subsequent days the student's time should be divided between observing your daily routine and working on planned exploration activities. The students will probably do some of the following:

- Interview you and record the interview either in writing or on tape.
- Photograph or sketch and write descriptions of site services, products, equipment, people.
- Ask for and read site-related literature (catalogs, brochures, training manuals, reports, sample work orders, letters, memos, etc.).
- Complete basic skills tasks (reading, oral and written communications, math) required for the job being explored.
- Write an evaluation of the experience.
- Ask you to approve their exploration record and indicate that their performance has been satisfactory.

Students might follow you through your daily routine, sit in on staff meetings, training sessions and other group activities and rotate among various work stations at your site.

STUDENT PROJECTS

Experience-based learning projects enable students to follow through on their explorations of community sites by returning for longer and more intensive learning. Project activities require students to make the transition from observing to doing and to become extensively involved with the people, equipment and other resources available at a site. Projects may last from several weeks to several months, depending on the resource person's time and student needs.

Project activities have three essential ingredients—skill development (interpersonal and job-related skills as well as basic skills) and the individual student's personal, learning, lifestyle and career objectives.

How are potential learning activities identified for projects? By examining the things you do in your work. School staff will be prepared to help you with this. They may provide you with an analysis form, interview you or assist you in doing the analysis yourself.

Analyzing your job for student learning means asking yourself three basic questions:

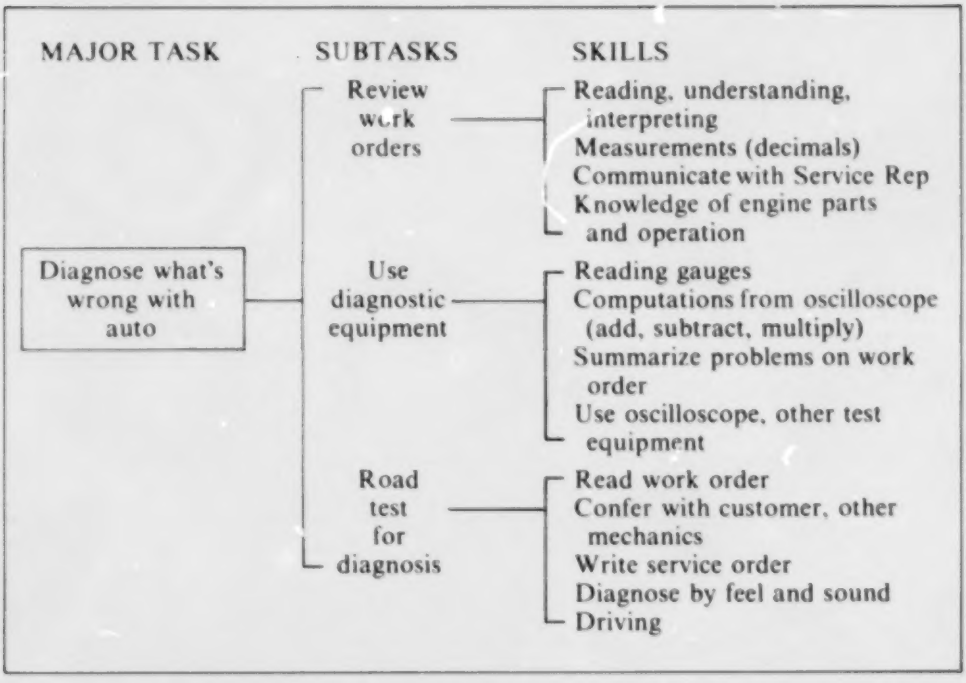
1. What are the major tasks of my job—the big responsibilities?
2. What are the subtasks that make up each big responsibility?
3. What skills are needed to perform each subtask? Look particularly at what you do on the job that relates to the following areas of knowledge:

reading	literature/the arts
mathematics	health/physical education
speech and writing	industrial/technical
science	business/office
geography/history	human relations
economics	personal development
psychology	(responsibility, decision making, etc.)

This third question—the skills breakout—is the key to specific things the student can learn from you while performing given tasks or helping or observing you perform them.

EXAMPLE OF A TASK ANALYSIS

Here's how one resource person—a mechanic—answered these questions in relation to *one* major job task. You can do a similar analysis for *each* major task of your job.



From your analysis, school staff and students will plan specific learning activities and objectives, subject to your approval before the student begins working on them. For example, here are a few learning objectives that might be specified from the sample analysis above:

The student will be able to write work orders that accurately describe the needs of the customer.

The student will be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide with 100 percent accuracy as required for use of diagnostic equipment.

The student will be able to communicate results of the road test to other mechanics and the customer.

The student will identify three common auto repair problems and chart the frequency with which these problems occur over a specified period of time.

The student will develop a three-page report on manufacturing standards and regulatory provisions of the American auto manufacturing industry.

It is eye-opening to see the many ways skills and knowledge are applied in practical, everyday situations at work sites. After your job has been analyzed and project activities have been planned, the students and you should discuss plans thoroughly, making sure that you both understand deadlines, goals and general expectations. Write down the goals and timeline you agree on, and plan for check-in points along the way to assess student progress.

Checklist for Planning Your Time with Students

Plan ahead

- ☐ Agree with staff person about specific purposes of each placement and your responsibilities during it.
- ☐ Find out the ages of students who will be placed with you (see pages 22-23 for general characteristics of age groups).
- ☐ Think about your job (see ideas on pages 10-11).
- ☐ Analyze your job (see suggestions on pages 7-8).
- ☐ Think of possible settings for activities (office area, factory area, conference room, etc.).
- ☐ Outline possible activities.
- ☐ Confirm the details of your commitment: time, date, number of students, nature of expectations.

Host the student

- ☐ Meet with the student (welcome, orientation, exchange of ideas).
- ☐ Clarify goals, timelines, expectations, responsibilities.
- ☐ Carry out planned activities.
- ☐ Give feedback to the student as the exploration or project is in progress.
- ☐ Evaluate the student's performance at the conclusion of the activities (see suggestions on page 12).

Follow up

- ☐ Write or telephone the school contact person with evaluation information.
- ☐ Evaluate your own involvement.

Student Expectations

The students with whom you will be working have expressed interest in what you do. They may be most interested in you as an adult succeeding in the working world, in the process of what you're doing or in the end product of your work. For example, suppose you are a Forest Service pilot spotting fires. One student may have fantasized about becoming a bush pilot; to that student you may be the true-life version of a dream. Another student may be very interested in how airplanes actually work mechanically. Yet another may be interested in the role fire-spotters are playing in helping to maintain forests. Each of these ways of looking at what you do can help students learn necessary skills in addition to learning about themselves and what they think.

Students need to hear your honest assessment of the work you do and the skills you need to do it; presenting only the interesting or glamorous aspects is not realistic. Above all they need to see you, an adult, coping with the freedoms, pressures and rewards that people face as they earn a living.

Students will come to you with varying interests. Find out what they hope to accomplish during their stay. Are there signs of shyness or misgivings? Try to help them relate this experience to other experiences they have had. Challenge them to think for themselves.

Suggestions for What to Say

Here are some topics to consider sharing with students about yourself and your job:

WHAT YOU DO

- ☐ job description
- ☐ major tasks, subtasks
- ☐ equipment or tools you use
- ☐ description of your typical day

WHAT YOUR WORK IS LIKE

- ☐ working hours
- ☐ salary range for this type of occupation
- ☐ fringe benefits (health insurance, retirement, credit unions, etc.)
- ☐ unions and/or professional organizations involved in your work
- ☐ working environment (noise, hazards, lighting, indoor/outdoor travel, special clothing, etc.)

- ☐ history of this kind of work
- ☐ what you produce (goods, services . . .)
- ☐ interdependence of your job and other jobs/products/industries
- ☐ where else in the community your kind of work is done
- ☐ government regulations affecting your work

THE FUTURE IN IT

- ☐ degree of opportunity for women and men regardless of race
- ☐ opportunities for advancement
- ☐ personal qualities needed
- ☐ employment projections; effects of technology and new knowledge on your work
- ☐ effects of the country's economic condition on your job
- ☐ hints you would give someone applying for your job
- ☐ other jobs you could do with these same skills

JOB ENTRY

- ☐ how you got started in this job
- ☐ other jobs you have held
- ☐ skills you already had that you use now; how you acquired them
- ☐ skills you had to learn specifically for this job; how you acquired them
- ☐ your recommendations to others for acquiring these same skills
- ☐ your job as a lifetime career or a stepping stone
- ☐ related jobs for which you are now prepared

HOW IT FEELS

- ☐ what you like and dislike about the job
- ☐ what you would change if you could
- ☐ avenues available to you for making suggestions on the job
- ☐ what you would rather do if you're not satisfied
- ☐ interpersonal skills you find most important and why
- ☐ underlying attitudes and values important to your job
- ☐ why you chose this type of work (with machines instead of people, for example)

HOW IT AFFECTS YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

- ☐ family time
- ☐ leisure time
- ☐ job-related skills you use elsewhere
- ☐ expanding interests
- ☐ adequate exercise
- ☐ general health
- ☐ tension-fatigue, vs. stimulation-fulfillment-increase in energy

Your Role in Evaluating Student Learning

You can provide three types of unique and useful evaluation information: feedback to students on their performance and progress, feedback to school staff on how the student is doing, and a simple evaluation of the effect of the experience on yourself to help you identify and improve both your strengths and weaknesses as a resource person.

Much of the student evaluation will be based on your subjective observations of how the student is doing. This information is an important part of experience-based learning: it may not result in "grades" as you know them, but it will give students and staff the information they need to measure student performance.

The following checklists can guide you in reviewing each student's experience, although program staff may give you specific forms for actual evaluations:

Discuss with the student

- Did the student sufficiently clarify goals? Timelines? Accomplish goals? Meet timelines? If not, why? What could change?
- What secondary goals did the student accomplish that weren't originally targeted?
- What new physical skills did the student learn?
- What new personal/social skills did the student learn?
- Did the student seem satisfied with the experience?
- Were there any problems (discipline, grooming, timelines, productivity, behavior)?
- How could the student improve performance?

Highlight the student's successes. Changing roles during an interview—with you playing the student, the student playing you—can be an effective way to find out what the student has picked up from the experience and how you did as a resource person.

Communicate with the school

- Did the student's performance meet program guidelines?
- Was the experience satisfactory to both of you?
- How would you change it next time?
- Are there ways in which the school could provide more assistance to you or the student?
- Did you have adequate preparation for what you needed to know?
- Do you have any suggestions for new or prospective resource people?

Ask yourself how you did

- What did you enjoy most and least in the experience and why?

- What would you like to do differently next time?
- How well did you and the student work together?
- What attitudes on your part and the student's part contributed to this?
- Were you adequately prepared?
- Have you gained any new insights into your work?
- Have you gained any new insights into yourself?
- Did you have trouble with any particular aspect of the experience?
- What were the major benefits to you from this experience? (Share these with school staff.)

Additional Hints for Being an Effective Resource Person

1. Let your coworkers know in advance when a student will be onsite so they can help the student feel at ease.
2. Introduce the student to as many employees as possible.
3. Explain employee standards to the student (the student should follow the same codes of behavior, attire and attendance as employees at a site).
4. Include the student in daily events (sitting in on meetings, making delivery runs and so forth).
5. Explain tasks clearly and concisely as well as the criteria you'll use to judge how well a task is done (use the same criteria you would set for yourself).
6. Be alert to clues the student gives you that something needs clarifying (uneasiness, evasiveness, loss of interest and so forth).
7. Give students hands-on experience with the things and processes you use in your work.
8. Give the students opportunities to discover things for themselves.
9. Give the students a chance to talk about themselves—the better you know them as individuals, the better you'll be able to work with them.
10. Help students relate what they're learning to their own needs and interests. If something doesn't make sense to the students, talk about it.
11. Try to build an atmosphere of acceptance and free exchange of ideas.
12. Be a good listener.
13. Give useful feedback on student ideas and behaviors.
14. Answer questions directly.
15. Be yourself and be consistent.
16. Realize there are no failures in the students' experiences with you; they will learn as much from their mistakes as from their successes.
17. End sessions with students on a positive note.
18. Ask the school to put you in touch with other resource people and exchange ideas with them.

What Can Students Gain from Community Experiences?

The possibilities for student learning activities in the community are endless and exciting, but experience-based learning won't always work as smoothly as this booklet makes it sound. Don't expect miracles (though there will be some). Be prepared for disappointments as well as successes with students. Even small achievements can be major steps in a student's growth. Here are some examples from other experience-based learning programs.

CARLA

Early in the year Carla selected an exploration in the office of a local court judge, a professional woman with teenage children of her own. During the exploration, the judge helped her with reading and interpersonal skills. Carla then chose to do a project at the site because she was encouraged by the judge's interest in her as an individual. As a result of her continued interaction with the judge, she became more self-confident and joined a weight-watching group so she could more comfortably meet the public.

GORDON

Convinced that he wanted to become a disc jockey, Gordon explored a local radio station, only to discover that he did not enjoy sitting in one place all day "just playing records and talking into a microphone." Searching for something to interest him, the resource person suggested that Gordon assist in preparing the evening weather news. Gradually he became interested not only in news broadcasting but in the science of meteorology. A project called "Understanding Our Weather" was negotiated, and he developed a sophisticated grasp of the scientific concepts underlying weather phenomena.

MARGARET

At the end of two years, Margaret's advisers described her as a completely different young person from when she entered the experience-based program. She seemed to like herself better, her attitude toward school had completely reversed itself and she seemed more in command of her own life.

Margaret herself said, "I was coming home from school one day, carrying a bunch of books, and all of a sudden I said to myself, 'Wait a minute. This isn't me carrying all these books.' I realized I had changed a lot. I was actually reading and studying now because it was stuff I was interested in."

DAVE

A "bright but quiet" student aspiring to a medical career selected a placement at a dentist's office. Dave was quick to learn many aspects of the job, from filling teeth and making plates to office business operations. Several times he even borrowed the dentist's texts for study at home.

At the same time, however, Dave's shyness and lack of self-confidence, evidenced by his shaking hands and agitated behavior when required to interact directly with patients or staff, prevented him from participating in the full range of experiences available to him at the dentist's office. Noticing these behaviors, the dentist began arranging activities to help Dave interact with patients. One exercise he devised was having him concentrate on looking patients in the eye and touching their shoulder while speaking to them. In addition, the dentist worked with Dave and his school adviser to specify some communication skills he could develop in a project on "what it takes to be a dentist."

A Resource Person Tells What It's Like

The following interview with a seasoned resource person offers some valuable advice:

1. **What characteristics does a resource person need?**

   Each time we have a new student we learn something. Resource people must be willing to spend some time learning about the individual students with whom they'll be working. At each site you need resource people who enjoy their jobs. You need enthusiastic people, not just those who are putting in time. People can't satisfactorily show someone else what they do unless they really like doing it themselves.

   A resource person should be natural and not try to "put on" for students. If you try to show your job as more important than it is, a student will perceive this and mark you as a phony.

2. **What are some things a resource person can do to help a student maintain interest?**

   You must walk a fine line between limiting a student's experience unnecessarily and having the student become economically productive at the site. The student should be given real tasks to do, but should never replace an employee. Think of things to keep a student involved, not just watching. For example, ask the student, "Could you mix this for me?" or "Please watch this gauge and record changes," and so forth. Students need to do activities related to the actual job being explored or learned, not menial tasks around the place.

   At our site we show films on the industry to vary the presentation of information. We let students sit in on meetings so they can see how business actually functions, and we use a variety of resource people at the site so students get a good idea of the variety of jobs available.

3. **How can a resource person help a student who has problems with reading, writing and math?**

   Look for ways to challenge students in keeping with their own learning levels. Some of the training materials we use for certain jobs are very challenging, for example. But some are also so difficult they would turn off students if they were introduced to them immediately. We try to start out slowly and avoid using too much technical jargon.

4. **How do you discuss problems of personal hygiene or grooming without hurting or alienating the student?**

We haven't had many problems with this. If it's something minor such as a student wearing a T-shirt with "I live to boogie" across the front, I feel it's better to let the student learn what kind of dress is appropriate by observing employees. If, on the other hand, it were something entirely off base for a regular employee, I would tell students very frankly that a change was necessary if they wished to stay here. In the case of long hair, students would be required to fix it in some way to ensure safety around machinery. Above all, be straight with students and tell them if something is a problem.

5. **What are the primary benefits a resource person receives?**

If matched well with students, resource people will find themselves talking with individuals who really are interested in what they're doing; that will be satisfying in itself. Some of us are isolated in our work; the student gives us someone to talk to about what we're doing. The hardest part of any job is communication—trying to tell other people about your ideas. A student gives us a chance to brainstorm ideas with a new person.

Questions and Answers

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

What if student behavior is a problem?

If student behavior becomes a problem at your site, first try to work it out with the student. If necessary, ask school staff for advice or assistance. If a student misses a day or arrives late several times with no satisfactory explanation, contact school staff about the problem.

GETTING ALONG

What if you and a student just don't get along?

Contact school staff immediately and discuss the problem. They may suggest ways to work out the situation between you and the student; overcoming the problem may be a significant step in the student's growth. If you can't find a solution, ask that the student be reassigned.

CHOOSING RESOURCE PEOPLE

If you are an employer, how do you select employees to be resource people?

That selection is dependent on your understanding of the resource person's role with students and knowledge of your employees. School staff can talk with you about what the resource people will be doing and the general qualities to look for. You alone will be familiar enough with your employees to decide which ones would make good "instructors."

LEARNING AND WORKING

Are students in experience-based learning programs supposed to participate in actual work at your site?

Yes. It's important for the student to get involved in what is actually being done at the site, but you'll have to distinguish between educational productivity and financial productivity. Remember, the student is at your site to learn, not to earn or do work for you. The student's actions and learning activities are limited by three main factors: legal regulations, safety considerations and your judgment as a resource person. School staff will work closely with you to clarify what is and is not appropriate for students at your site.

Make sure that students understand safety procedures before allowing them in potentially hazardous areas or to use equipment. (For more information about safety see "Hazardous Occupations," Exemption II, page 9 of *A Guide to Child Labor Provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act*, Child Labor Bulletin No. 101 (revised), 1971. Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. 20c)

EDUCATIONAL AND FINANCIAL PRODUCTIVITY

How do you make the distinction between educational productivity and financial productivity?

Students in experience-based learning programs are expected to be *educationally productive* during their time at work sites in the community; they are to produce obvious results and participate in learning activities in a sincere and conscientious manner. Students are not, however, to be *financially productive;* they are not to turn out units of work that result in financial profit for the employer, the company or the organization.

As a rule of thumb, students should receive more from the community site in terms of time, attention, materials and so forth than they are returning in the way of production or services.

Students often use equipment; handle materials; make, assemble, draw and paint things; and perform services for the purpose of learning as much as possible about how these things are done and how it feels to do them.

Students gain an understanding of what needs to be done in a work task and why. Students do a variety of tasks and remain in specific work areas only as long as those areas are returning obvious learning benefits. The students' payoff is in terms of knowledge acquired, skills learned, habits developed and experiences gained.

Financial productivity is distinctly different from educational productivity. It would occur if a student remained on one job with the intent of performing that job. The student would turn out work comparable to that of regular employees, which could be sold for profit in the interest of the company or organization. Emphasis would be on the production of products and services rather than development of attitudes and values. Evaluation would be on the basis of quality and volume of physical work done. None of this is the case with experience-based learning.

CHILD LABOR LAWS

Does the student's nonpaid involvement at community sites comply with child labor laws?

Yes, if experiences are educationally productive rather than financially productive and if students are considered learners, not employees. The following six conditions have been outlined by the U.S. Department of Labor as what constitutes a bona fide *nonpaid* training situation under the Fair Labor Standards Act (all six conditions must be met):

1. The training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to that which would be given in a vocational school.
2. The training is for the benefit of the trainees or students.
3. The trainees or students do not displace regular employees but work under their close observation.
4. The employer who provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the trainees or students and on occasion may actually have operations impeded.
5. The trainees or students are not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period.
6. The employers and the trainees or students understand that the trainees or students are not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.

LIABILITY

Who assumes liability for students at your workplace?

School staff should explain provisions the school district has made for coverage of students who go off-campus for educational purposes. Personal injury protection for students is usually provided either by the student's own medical and accident coverage as verified by parents or by the district's coverage for students participating in school-related work situations, but the district must notify its insurance agent that student learning will be taking place off-campus.

CONFIDENTIALITY

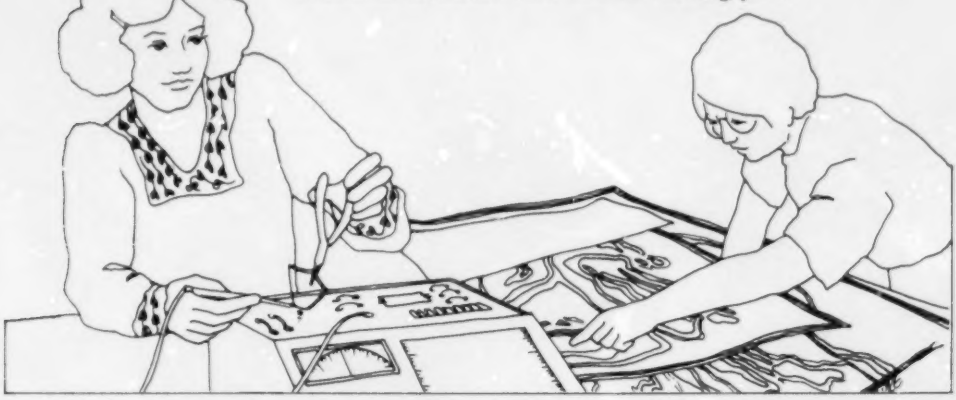
Can you be a resource person if your work is confidential?

Agencies or individuals dealing with confidential or client-privileged information—doctors, lawyers, psychiatrists, counselors, ministers, banks, credit unions and the like—can usually identify some learning activities for student observation or involvement that do not interfere with confidentiality. Students can learn without participating in every aspect of a given occupation, and the realities of working around situations where confidential information is used can, in themselves, be educational for students.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

What are the students apt to be like?

The learning activities you plan should be geared to the age level and interests of the students. Following are thumbnail sketches of some characteristic learning traits for different ages to give you a hint about what to expect from the students who will be visiting you.



Early adolescence (ages 12-15; grades 7-9)

- energetic, complex young people with a growing sense of independence, yet still bouncing between childhood and adolescence
- frequently uneasy about trying new physical experiences
- anxious for peer group approval; want to conform in appearance, possessions, activities
- eager for adult status and privileges but not responsibilities
- beginning to think seriously about career options but concerned primarily with activities of the moment, rather than the future
- frequently plan more than they can do
- may find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time
- interested in making money (usually through chores at home and in the neighborhood)
- often generalize and make strong value judgments
- enjoy developing new skills
- learning to socialize with adults; especially interested in displaying these traits to adults other than parents
- interested in factual information; a great age for reading and exploring

Late adolescence (ages 15-18; grades 10-12)

- trying to relate what is going on in school to possible career options
- eager for opportunities to make decisions
- may challenge authority
- very interested in physical appearance (their standards, not necessarily yours)
- want independence and privileges but may still have trouble with responsibilities and personal discipline
- tend to feel uneasy about their adequacy or preparation for the future after high school
- trying out different values; beginning to build personal philosophies
- growing interest in the problems of the broader community
- highly sensitive to the reactions of adults although they may feign indifference
- eager to have others, particularly adults, show respect for their individuality

Young adults (age 18+)

- serious about career implications of their learning
- goal-oriented and thinking in terms of the future
- want time to think through processes and problems
- conscious of money and responsibility
- gaining historical perspective
- want both the 'big picture' and details

ORIGIN OF EXPERIENCE-BASED LEARNING

Where did experience-based learning come from?

Experience-based learning has been with us a long time. In fact, it once was the *only* way society passed knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. For several years now, many different groups have been finding ways to apply the principles of experience-based learning—using the community as the classroom—to breathe new life into secondary education and help the schools do a better job of preparing young people for their adult lives. Programs will differ from one school district to the next, but they share a common belief that real experiences in the community can add ingredients too often missing from classroom learning: first-hand information, opportunities to test ideas and concepts in real situations and personal incentives to learn.

The National Institute of Education (NIE), funded through the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, has been among the groups developing experience-based learning programs. Its concept was first tested for four years in four different locations—San Francisco, California; Tigard, Oregon; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Charleston, West Virginia—before being shared with other school districts. Careful evaluation of the four models yielded such positive results with students that NIE's experience-based learning models are now being adopted and adapted in schools throughout the country.

While the kinds of learning activities described in this booklet—explorations and student projects—are based on the programs tested by the National Institute of Education, **the basic guidelines for the community resource person remain essentially the same for all experience-based learning programs. The suggestions for working with learners are offered here to help you enjoy and make the most of your time with students.**